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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 30, 2000

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**FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Scattered showers dampened many areas during the week of April 23 through 29 but also missed many localities. Rain totaled from none to an inch and a quarter for the week with heavier amounts falling in western Panhandle and northern localities. Immokalee, Homestead, and some west central areas recorded no rain for the week. Temperatures averaged one to four degrees below normal at the major stations. Most highs were in the 70s and 80s while most lows were in the 40s, 50s, and 60s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle is mostly adequate with scattered areas of very short or short moisture. Moisture throughout the Peninsula is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Some areas of the Panhandle received heavy rainfall with washing in some peanut fields. Farmers will be actively planting cotton and peanuts as fields dry out. Tobacco and corn are in good condition. There have been a number of wild fires in the central Peninsula area due to the lack of rainfall. Growers reported 16 percent of the peanuts planted.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	14	29	18	24
Short	73	57	65	65
Adequate	11	14	15	11
Surplus	2	0	2	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, the pasture and cattle condition decreased due to continued drought. In the Panhandle, pasture condition is mostly fair, the cattle condition fair to excellent. Pasture and hay fields have not yet recovered from previous dry weeks. In the north counties fire hazard has increased daily from dry, cool, and windy weather. In the central Peninsula, pasture was very poor to poor due to dry, windy weather. Pasture in the west central area is short and ranchers are rotating grazing. The condition of cattle is mostly fair. In the south, the condition of the range remains fair, with low lying areas in better condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	10	0	0
Poor	30	20	10	10
Fair	65	65	65	80
Good	5	5	25	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** There was very little if any rain in most areas of the citrus belt this week. Most groves were hot and dry with strong afternoon winds. Growers are continuing to irrigate where there is sufficient clean water. Several caretakers are reporting salt water intrusion into their water supplies. Some ponds and lakes are getting too low to be used for irrigation. Trees are starting to shed some of their excessive new little pea size fruit that cannot be carried for next season. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues to be very active with most of the fruit going to the

processors. Movement of all grapefruit and Honey tangerines is slowing as supplies are running low. Temple harvest is just about over for this season.

Caretakers are very active cutting cover crops and herbiciding. Everyone is irrigating. Hedging and topping continue. Post bloom-nutritional sprays are being applied in all areas. Burn permits are limited due to the dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 16	Apr 23	Apr 30
Navel oranges	1,000	0	0
Early & Mid oranges	8,000	4,000	1,000
Valencia oranges	6,751,000	7,397,000	8,069,000
All grapefruit	2,547,000	1,601,000	1,647,000
Honey tangerines	145,000	128,000	103,000
Temples	13,000	2,000	0

**VEGETABLES:** Harvesting of most crops continues to slow seasonally in Dade County. Major vegetables being harvested include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, blueberries, cabbage, cucumbers, okra, snap beans, squash, sweet corn, eggplant, and watermelon.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Bean quality and yield were good for the week. Next week's volume should be decreasing as growers complete harvest. Everglades--Harvest continues but was slowed by earlier rains. West Central--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting continues to gain momentum. Quality and color are fair to good. Size is variable. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady with fair to good quality. East Coast--Crop remains in fair to good shape. Older plantings are showing bloom, pin beans forming. New growth and bush development are fair to good.

**BLUEBERRIES:** North, West Central--Picking is active. Supplies are increasing.

**CABBAGE:** West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Fruit quality is fair to good. Size is variable. Hastings, North Central--Growth and development are normal. The crop is in good condition. Head size and quality are good. Harvest is winding down. Dade--Cabbage harvest is complete.

**SWEET CORN:** Zellwood--Harvest continues with excellent yield prospects. Everglades--Heavy rains damaged some fields. There may be some abandonment. Heavy supplies are still moving to market. Southwest--The crop is in good condition with normal development. Harvest remains steady with good quality. East Coast--Plant growth is mostly good on very limited acreage. A few blocks are planted for local sales. Older fields from the winter crop are being cleaned up. Dade--Quality and yield are good. Corn harvest will be mostly over after next week. Some small fields will produce a small supply for a couple more weeks.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Dade--A very small supply of cukes is available. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is

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steady. Fruit quality and color are fair to good. Size of fruit is variable. East Coast--Crop is in fair to good condition. Initial picks provide good quality and color. In some blocks harvested yields are lighter. Overhead irrigation is being used in the younger plantings to ensure good moisture. Some vines are showing dehydration from drier weather and winds. Older fields are being mowed and cleaned up.

**PICKLES:** Dade--A very small supply of pickles is available. West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit is of fair to good quality. Size is normal. The yield is fair to good. Some early picked fields are being cleaned up. North Central--Harvest is active. The crop is in good condition. Yield and quality are good.

**EGGPLANT:** East Coast--Growth and development are mostly good. Fruit setting and sizing are improving. Harvest volume increased slightly with quality and color good from the initial first cutting. Oldest fields picked over are being cleaned up. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth is slow to normal. Harvest continues to increase slowly. Yields are fair. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Dade--A small supply of fruit is available with good quality and size. Yield is average. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good with normal development. Harvest is steady with good size and quality available.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvest is winding down for the season.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Harvest continues winding down but iceberg continues at a moderate pace.

**OKRA:** Dade--Okra supplies are increasing as new fields come into production. Quality and yield are good.

**PEPPERS:** East Coast--Crop conditions are in fair to good shape. Plant growth and development are slow from the warmer temperatures and strong winds. Plant stress continues. Crown picks from plants that have abundant foliage are showing better quality, less sunburn on the pods. Harvest is moderate from all picks. Harvest is lighter on red's, yellow, and specialty peppers. Southwest--Harvest is steady. Quality and size are fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Crop condition is fair to good. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Harvest is increasing with good sizes and quality available.

**POTATOES:** Dade--Potato harvest is complete. Southwest--Growers should finish digging this week. West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. A majority of the chips are harvested. Fruit quality is fair to good. Hastings--Growers should start to dig table stock this week.

**RADISHES:** Everglades--Harvest continues. Some acreage of

young radishes was abandoned because of rains. Supplies for the next two weeks will be reduced.

**SQUASH:** West Central--Crop condition is good. Harvest is increasing. Quality and color are good. Sizes are small to medium. Yield is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition with normal growth. Harvest is steady. Fruit sizes and quality are good. Dade--Volume is winding down seasonally with some good quality available. A fair volume could be available for the next two weeks depending on prices. East Coast--Crop condition is improving. Later plantings are making a good recovery. Plant growth is showing some bloom and some fruit setting. Harvest is light with fancy and mediums being cut.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Season is over except for some small amounts of U-Pic harvesting.

**TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Plant growth and activity slowed a little this week due to cool weather. Harvest is active but slow getting started. Fruit quality is fair. Spraying and watering are active. East Coast--Crop conditions for spring are in fair to good shape. The younger fields are slower in sizing fruit. Strong winds and drier conditions are affecting plants causing some wilting and dehydration. Plants are showing stress. Harvesting is lighter from all picks. Crown picks are providing mostly good quality and sizes. Clean up is active. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Plant growth and fruit sizing are slow due to cool weather at night. Harvest is steady with light volume. Many growers are finished harvesting. Size is variable with fair to good quality. Growers are spraying to control insects and are cleaning fields. Dade--Tomato harvesting is almost over. Volume is low. Growers are mostly busy cleaning up fields and removing stakes, plastic, and planting cover crops. Quincy--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is expected to start in late May.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are slow to normal. Harvest is increasing. Size and color are good. Yields are fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth is normal. Harvest is steady with fair to good quality.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Harvest is gaining. Color and size are normal. Yields are increasing. Southwest--Picking is steady. Condition is fair to good. Development is normal and quality is fair to good.

**WATERMELONS:** West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are slow to normal. Harvest should start within the next two weeks. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is gaining. Quality is fair to good.

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